

Serial No.: 09/329,002

Docket No.: ECC-5062CIP2

Amendment After FINAL dated April 12, 2004

Responsive to Office Action of February 13, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Prior to the present Office Action, claims 1-37, 60-80, and 86-87 were pending (though claims 12-16, 19, 25 and 71-74 were previously withdrawn subject to allowance of the generic claims). By present amendment, claims 61 and 86-87 have been canceled and claims 88-140 have been added. Applicants respectfully request to reinstate claims 12-16, 19, 25 and 71-74 that were previously withdrawn as they depend from the allowed generic base claims. Therefore claims 1-37, 60, 62-80, and 88-140 remain pending.

Applicants acknowledge the removal of the section 112 rejections of Claims 30-37. These claims were allowable in the previous Office Action pending resolution of the 112 problems. Currently, the Examiner requires that claim 30 should include what element the junction housing is softer than. Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 30 as above and believe it is now in condition for allowance.

Claim 76 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Specifically, claim 76 had an antecedent problem. Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 76 to properly depend from claim 75.

Various claims stand rejected in view of the prior art, however, a large majority of the claims is deemed allowable by the Examiner. Therefore, in order to expedite the issuance of the allowed claims and without any prejudice to future prosecution of any of the rejected claims, the allowable dependent claims have been combined into their respective parent claims as detailed in the next section so that all of the currently pending claims are allowable and ready for issuance.

Amended and Newly Presented Claims

Dependent claims 4-11, 17-18, 20, 22-24, 30-37, 61, 63-70, 75, 77-78, and 80 are deemed allowable by the Examiner if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims. Applicants note that the list of allowable claims printed on page 4 of the Office Action does not agree with the list on the "Office Action Summary" sheet. Given that the "objected to" claim list on the "Office Action Summary" sheet matches up with the "withdrawn" and "rejected" lists, Applicants presume it to be controlling. The list on page 4 must have been a typographical error.

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Independent claim 1 was amended to include the limitations of the allowable dependent claim 4 while independent claim 60 was amended to include the limitations of the allowable dependent claim 61.

New independent claims 88, 115 represent a combination of claim 1 with the allowable dependent claims 17 and 22 respectively, and new independent claims 128, 139 and 140 represent a combination of claim 60 with the allowable dependent claims 63, 75 and 77 respectively. All amended or newly presented claims represent only allowable combinations as indicated by the Examiner in the February 13, 2004 Office Action. For the Examiner's convenience, all currently pending claims are shown below in the chart to explain their relationship with the previously pending claims as follows:

New	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old
1.	1.+4.	25.	25.	72.	72.	103.	18.	127.	20.
2.	2.	26.	26.	73.	73.	104.	19.	128.	60.+63.
3.	3.	27.	27.	74.	74.	105.	20.	129.	64.
4.	4.*	28.	28.	75.	75.	106.	21.	130.	65.
5.	5.*	29.	29.	76.	76.*	107.	22.	131.	66.
6.	6.	30.	30.*	77.	77.	108.	23.	132.	68.
7.	7.	31.	31.	78.	78.	109.	24.	133.	71.
8.	8.	32.	32.	79.	79.	110.	25.	134.	72.
9.	9.	33.	33.	80.	80.	111.	26.	135.	73.
10.	10.	34.	34.	88.	1.+17.	112.	27.	136.	77.
11.	11.	35.	35.	89.	2.	113.	28.	137.	78.
12.	12.*	36.	36.	90.	3.	114.	29.	138.	79.
13.	13.	37.	37.	91.	5.	115.	1.+22.	139.	60.+75.
14.	14.	60.	60.+61	92.	6.	116.	2.	140.	60.+77.
15.	15.	62.	62.	93.	7.	117.	3.		
16.	16.*	63.	63.	94.	8.	118.	5.		

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New	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old
17.	17.	64.	64.	95.	9.	119.	6.		
18.	18.	65.	65.	96.	10.	120.	7.		
19.	19.	66.	66.	97.	11.	121.	8.		
20.	20.	67.	67.	98.	12.	122.	9.		
21.	21.	68.	68.	99.	13.	123.	10.		
22.	22.	69.	69.	100.	14.	124.	12.		
23.	23.	70.	70.	101.	15.	125.	13.		
24.	24.	71.	71.	102.	16.	126.	15.		

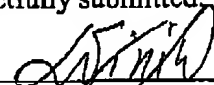
Notes: * amended, Independent claims in bold

In accordance with the foregoing remarks and amendments, claims 1-37, 60, 62-80, and 88-140 are believed to be in condition for allowance. If there is any further hindrance to allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned by telephone.

Respectfully submitted,

Date:

April 12, 2004


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